Message

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Subject: OCSPP News for November 9, 2021

OCSPP Daily News Round-Up

Toxics

- Bloomberg Law 11/08; New York Bans Sale, Use of Toxic Coal-Tar Pavement Sealants
- E&E News 11/08; Health groups quit baby food industry effort to limit toxins
- Inside TSCA 11/08; California Weighs Listing Microplastics As 'Candidate Chemical' Under SCP
- Inside TSCA 11/08; EPA Seeks Framework To Value Non-Animal Chemical Testing Methods
- Inside TSCA 11/08; EPA says revised HBCD evaluation will be completed in 'weeks'
- The Gainesville Times 11/08; A national report lists Gainesville as a hotspot for cancer-causing air pollution. Local officials say there's more to the story.

PFAS

- Baker City Herald 11/08; State to test water for persistent chemicals
- Bloomberg Law 11/08; $10 Billion for PFAS, Other Contaminants in Infrastructure Bill

Pesticides

- The Daily Star 11/09; Solar-Powered Insect Trap: A potential alternative to pesticide

Blog/OpEd/Other

- Bergeson & Campbell Blogs 11/08; EPA Denies TSCA Section 21 Petition Regarding Chemical Mixtures in Cigarettes
- Beyond Pesticides 11/09; Switching to 'Healthier' Mediterranean Diet Increases Pesticide Exposure Three-fold, Unless You Go Organic

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New York Bans Sale, Use of Toxic Coal-Tar Pavement Sealants
Keshia Clukey, Bloomberg Law
https://news.bloomberglaw.com/environment-and-energy/new-york-bans-sale-use-of-toxic-coal-tar-pavement-sealants?context=search&index=23

New York State will ban the use and sale of pavement products containing the carcinogen, coal-tar, under legislation signed by Gov. Kathy Hochul (D) on Monday.

The bill (S.4095B/A.518A) prohibits the sale or use of coal-tar, which is used as a sealcoat in parking lots and playgrounds. The ban on the sale of coal-tar products takes effect on Nov. 8, 2022, and the ban on the use of the products takes effect on Nov. 8, 2023.

Coal-tar sealants contain high levels of polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, known as PAHs, which can wear off as pavement dust that runs into waterways and has been found in soil, house dust, and water bodies. Exposure to PAHs has been linked to an increased risk of lung, skin, bladder, and respiratory cancers, according to the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry. Coal-tar has been banned in other states, including Washington and Minnesota, as well as Washington, D.C.
"Coal tar isn't just dangerous for fish and aquatic wildlife, it's dangerous for our children and our pets," the bill's sponsor, Assemblywoman Linda Rosenthal (D), said in a June news release after the bill passed in the legislature. "When effective alternatives exist, such as asphalt-based sealants, that contain and shed far fewer toxic particles, there is no reason not to act."

Health groups quit baby food industry effort to limit toxins
Ariel Wittenberg, E&E News
https://subscriber.politicopro.com/article/eenews/2021/11/08/health-groups-quit-baby-food-industry-effort-to-limit-toxins-282957

GREENWIRE | Two environmental health groups have resigned from a council meant to lower the heavy metal content of baby foods due to what they say is a lack of cooperation from some of the nation's biggest baby food brands.

The Baby Food Council was formed in 2019 by Gerber, Earth's Best, Happy Family Organics and Beech-Nut, as well as the Environmental Defense Fund and Healthy Babies Bright Futures, after years of work and reports from those two environmental health groups drew attention to the high levels of lead, arsenic, mercury and cadmium in baby food. Those heavy metals are neurotoxins that can affect brain development in babies and toddlers.

The council was founded to set voluntary standards to lower concentrations in baby foods and conduct research on farming and production best-practices for reducing heavy metals in ingredients, like sweet potatoes, which often naturally absorb the metals from soil.

"The mission of the Baby Food Council was a shared recognition that there was a problem that needed to be solved," said Healthy Babies Bright Future's National Director Charlotte Brody.

When the council was started, its members met monthly, first in person, and then over Zoom during the pandemic. But those relationships soured over this summer when, Brody and EDF say, the baby food companies refused to provide information key to setting such voluntary standards.

Prior to setting limits on heavy metals in baby food, Brody said, the natural first step would be to see what levels of different toxins already exist in finished products. The four baby food companies had previously agreed to provide that information to the council by August, Brody said, but then missed the deadline. One company — Hain Celestial, which owns Earth's Best — told the council outright that it would not provide the information. The other companies simply never provided the data.

"We needed to know the current range to know the starting line so we could measure progress toward reducing these levels," Brody said. "And that didn't seem to me at the beginning to be a high barrier, but then it became one and we never got those numbers."

Tom Neltner, senior director for safer chemicals at EDF, agreed. He said he spent eight hours a week on work for the Baby Food Council, a time commitment that he found "hard to justify" when the companies stopped cooperating.

"It's really hard to get continuous improvement if you don't have a baseline and if you don't know where you are at," he said. "It's essential to a standard and the companies were just unwilling or unable to share that data."

Neltner noted that the council had planned to use that baseline data not only as a baseline to track companies' progress on lowering heavy metals in baby foods and to set a new voluntary standard, but also for research into the production line. The council had partnered with researchers at multiple universities, including Cornell University's College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, who could have dug into the data to compare differences in companies' supply chains and farming practices used by suppliers to see if any differences in techniques led to lower levels of neurotoxins in the final products.

"It wasn't going to just be the benchmark for the standard but also looking at if we wash squash this way or peel carrots that way, does that change the heavy metals content," he said. "We would have been able to identify opportunities."

In a statement, a Gerber spokesperson said the company "disagrees with any characterization that we are not committed to progress on this very important issue." They did not respond to specific questions about why Gerber did not share data on heavy metal contents of its products with the council, but the spokesperson said, "Gerber values the purpose of the Baby Food Council as it offered the best opportunity to work with multiple stakeholders on the shared mission of lowering the presence of heavy metals in baby food."

Beech-Nut [...]

California Weighs Listing Microplastics As 'Candidate Chemical' Under SCP
Curt Barry, Inside TSCA
https://insideepa.com/tsca-news/california-weighs-listing-microplastics-candidate-chemical-under-scp

California toxics regulators are considering listing microplastics as a "candidate chemical" under the state's Safer Consumer Products (SCP) green chemistry program, though some advisors are urging against a quick decision given the complexity and breadth of microplastics and the fact that other agencies are further ahead in considering how to address them.

"At this time, I don't see a compelling rationale for the program to take on an additional process to add these to the candidate chemicals list," said Rebecca Sutton, a member of the state's Green Ribbon Science Panel, which advises the Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) on green chemistry topics, during a Nov. 5 meeting.

"I might suggest waiting for the other processes that are going on from other authoritative bodies, because some of them may end up adding microplastics to their lists, which would then create a more direct opportunity for adding these to your candidate chemicals list without a lot of extra burden on the program staff," added Sutton, who is a scientist with the San Francisco Estuary Institute.

Yet several other panelists said at the meeting that DTSC officials should designate microplastics as SCP candidates, though they varied on whether such a listing should be based on type, size or other metrics. They also noted that the structure of the SCP program would require listing specific products that contain microplastics, making it especially important to pick products that could represent major reductions in releases of the materials.

For instance, panel member Molly Jacobs, a senior research associate at the Lowell Center for Sustainable Production at the University of Massachusetts-Lowell, said "I personally think that's a clear pathway in terms of justifying their inclusion."

The panelists were responding to specific questions raised in a November background paper on microplastics drafted by DTSC staff, on whether microplastics should be listed as candidate chemicals and whether SCP has a role to play in limiting the pollutants "considering our program limitations."

DTSC's first step toward regulating a material under SCP is to identify substances that should be placed on the "candidate chemicals" list. Then department officials decide whether products containing those chemicals should be considered "priority products" to be further evaluated.

Once products are placed on the priority list, companies that make them must conduct chemical alternatives analyses to determine whether there are safer substitutes. Based on the results of those analyses, DTSC can eventually restrict or ban the original chemicals at issue in the products.

Ubiquitous Substances

Microplastics are used in numerous products and are generally defined as pieces of plastic less than 5 millimeters across -- a category that includes both items deliberately manufactured at that scale, like "microbeads" used in some cosmetics, and those produced when larger items break down in the environment. They have become ubiquitous in many waters, but their hazards are largely unknown, leading to a widespread push to tighten controls on them.

But California's Water Resources Control Board (WRCB) has already initiated rulemaking on microplastics in drinking water, approving a controversial definition for the compounds last year, prompting questions on whether DTSC should allow that process to play out rather than advancing its own action on the same pollutants.

According to a WRCB spokesman, the board is now set to solicit public comments on "standardized analytical methods for monitoring microplastics in drinking water" and a "four-year plan for testing and reporting microplastics in drinking water."

Earlier this year, industry groups pushed back against several international and California-specific proposals for microplastics limits, warning that rules as currently written would require companies to prevent releases of

waste too small to reliably detect while undercutting [...]

EPA Seeks Framework To Value Non-Animal Chemical Testing Methods
Maria Hegstad, Inside TSCA
https://insideepa.com/tsca-news/epa-seeks-framework-value-non-animal-chemical-testing-methods

Scientists at EPA are working with contractors and academics on a framework for staff to assess the value of data from new alternate methods (NAMs) of chemical testing and their tradeoffs compared to other models like animal tests, as the agency weighs how to approach the "vast number" of industrial chemicals with inadequate toxicity data.

"We need a framework for evaluating the merits of the toxicity tests, to be able to demonstrate in an objective way they are better than the existing approaches, how they are better, and in particular, are the useful for testing the large number of chemicals in commerce that currently do not have testing data," Paul Price, an EPA researcher, told members of the Board of Scientific Counselors' chemicals research subcommittee at the panel's Nov. 5 meeting.

"The key elements are cost, duration and uncertainty. We'd like to have methods that allow us to do tradeoffs, say if we do it faster, is it worth paying more money? If we do it cheaper, is that worth putting up with a little less certainty in the results? And can we determine impacts on both economics of the testing and public health?" Price asked.

Such considerations are necessary, Price told the panel, because there is a "vast number" of industrial chemicals that lack adequate toxicity data and closing those gaps using traditional approaches to multi-endpoint testing would be prohibitively expensive. He estimated that the battery of testing required to register a new pesticide costs about $8 million to $16 million, and can take between three and eight years.

"While we are waiting for these tests to be competed the exposures and risks associated with them are ongoing, therefore we are paying a penalty," which shows the value of quicker testing, he said. But he added that the "more uncertain the results are, the more likely we will be making errors in our regulatory decisions . . . leading to higher social costs."

Thus, Price said, EPA researchers are weighing metrics for NAM-based testing with two different approaches -- a cost-effectiveness analysis and a "value of information" analysis, each of which seeks to quantify the advantages or disadvantages of advanced test methods compared to traditional models.

Results from those studies could help the agency fulfill its mandate in the reformed Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA) to advance use of NAMs and reduce animal testing as much as practicable.

EPA has already contracted with the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) to convene an advisory committee on NAMs, which officials are asking to compare the results of those tests with animal-based studies to help set "benchmarks and expectations" for use of NAMs in TSCA and other programs.

Most BOSC members who questioned Price after his presentation generally seemed to support the project, though Jennifer McPartland, a scientist with Environmental Defense Fund, questioned whether the agency's mathematical approach is adequately considering inequalities in public health.

"I'm wondering how much flexibility there is in the models that you've developed here as we broaden our notion of benefit and cost. I know the primary focus here was health cost," she said. "For fenceline communities

its not just health cost its home value, it's all these other costs."

McPartland added that from Price's descriptions the agency's calculations appear to be "averaged across the whole population but there are going to be, in reality -- the distribution in health costs is not equal across people. Some people are going to be disproportionately affected from a particular substance -- I'm very much thinking about the equity and environmental justice implications of this type of approach."

Price replied that costs could be defined in different ways and can include other economic values, such as loss of property value in the model and there are ways to tweak it to address McPartland's concern. He added that equity concerns are "an endemic problem to value [...]

EPA says revised HBCD evaluation will be completed in 'weeks'

NA, Inside TSCA

https://insideepa.com/tsca-takes/epa-says-revised-hbcd-evaluation-will-be-completed-weeks

EPA is telling the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 9th Circuit that it expects to complete revisions to its TSCA evaluation of the cluster of flame retardant chemicals known as HBCD "in the coming weeks" and will seek public comment on the revisions, potentially answering long-standing questions on how officials will rework the 10 Trump-era evaluations.

"EPA is in the process of drafting a proposed revised HBCD risk determination. EPA anticipates the proposed revised risk determination will be completed in the coming weeks," reads a Nov. 8 status report that the agency filed with the 9th Circuit, which earlier this year stayed environmentalists and labor groups' challenges to the evaluation to allow the Biden administration to reconsider its predecessor's approach.

"Upon completion, EPA plans to open a public comment period on the proposed revised risk determination and will issue a final revised risk determination for HBCD after taking into account public comments."

The Justice Department filed the report with the 9th Circuit in the trio of consolidated suits Alaska Community Action on Toxics v. EPA, California Professional Firefighters et al v. EPA and United Autoworkers v. EPA, which challenged EPA over its determinations that certain uses of the HBCD chemicals -- also known as the "cyclic aliphatic bromide cluster" -- do not pose unreasonable risks under the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA).

The report adds that "[b]ecause agency proceedings are ongoing, this case should stay in abeyance. The next status report is due on January 10, 2022."

The challenge is one of several brought by environmental and worker-safety groups that the Biden EPA successfully asked the 9th Circuit to stay while it reviews and considers revisions to the Trump-era risk evaluations and resulting risk determinations. The agency has yet to release any of the reconsidered evaluations.

EPA's announcement that staff expect to complete the HBCD soon is not entirely surprising. During her remarks at a Sept. 28 industry conference, chemicals chief Michal Freedhoff reiterated her view that three of the 10 Trump-era chemical evaluations -- those of HBCD, pigment violet 29 and ongoing uses of chrysotile asbestos -- are sufficient to support risk management rules with only limited revisions.

She said the agency expects to conduct more extensive reviews of the other seven, involving use of a new fenceline screening analysis tool in addition to some policy changes Freedhoff announced last spring.

For those three evaluations, Freedhoff said at the time, "the Agency currently believes that the risk evaluations are likely sufficient to inform the risk management approaches being considered, and that these approaches will be protective" and would "soon reissue" draft risk determinations.

More recently, she told the House Energy & Commerce Committee at a hearing late last month that she "expects" the proposed rule stemming from the chrysotile asbestos evaluation to go to the White House Office of Management & Budget for review before the end of the calendar year, spurring speculation that the revised asbestos evaluation would be the first released.

A national report lists Gainesville as a hotspot for cancer-causing air pollution. Local officials say there's more to the story.

Nick Watson, The Gainesville Times

https://www.gainesvilletimes.com/news/business-industry/a-national-report-lists-gainesville-as-a-hotspot-for-cancer-causing-air-pollution-local-officials-say-theres-more-to-the-story/

A national report from ProPublica lists Gainesville and Kubota as a hotspot for cancer-causing air pollution. Corporate and government officials told The Times this week that there is more to the story and the data behind it.

The ProPublica report highlighted the area in Gainesville surrounding the Kubota Manufacturing of America headquarters, a corporation creating agricultural equipment. ProPublica is a nonprofit organization known for producing investigative journalism.

The report stated the estimated excess lifetime cancer risk for industrial sources was 1 in 700 or 14 times the Environmental Protection Agency's acceptable risk. The reporting used data from the EPA's Toxics Release Inventory, which "tracks the management of certain toxic chemicals that may pose a threat to human health and the environment," according to the inventory. But Kubota and Georgia officials said the data has been overestimated.

ElringKlinger in Buford also was listed in the report as having a 1 in 2,600 estimated excess lifetime cancer risk or 3.9 times the EPA's acceptable risk.

The risk-over-time graphic for Kubota included in the report shows a dramatic jump between 2015 and 2016, while the graphic for ElringKlinger spiked between 2016 and 2017.

The Times sent an email to ElringKlinger's Vice President of Marketing and Communications, Andreas Braendle, to discuss the ProPublica report, but that request was not returned.

Kubota sent a statement to ProPublica that is listed in their report:

"The (Toxics Release Inventory) reports are estimates based on approximate emissions from KMA's use of steel in its equipment manufacturing process for laser cutting, stamping, bending, and welding. These estimates are calculated by multiplying the percentage of materials listed on the supplier's material data sheet by the total weight of the steel purchased from the supplier. Accordingly, KMA relies on the supplier's information with respect to the percentage of minerals contained in the steel purchased. Additionally, not every chemical constituent from steel is released into the environment and most of it is incorporated as an article component."

The Times sent questions to James Boylan, who is in the Department of Natural Resources' Environmental Protection Division as the assistant branch chief for air protection.

Boylan said the Environmental Protection Division's own evaluation "indicates that the risk from metal emissions such as chromium and nickel identified in the ProPublica report is significantly overestimated due to assumptions in the Toxic Release Inventory emissions data."

"Earlier this year EPD submitted comments to the US Environmental Protection Agency on the overestimation of metal emissions for Kubota and other manufacturing facilities in Georgia while reviewing EPA's draft 2017, 2018, and 2019 national emissions inventory," Boylan wrote in an email. "EPD determined that metal emissions were approximately 1% of the emissions reported to the (Toxics Release Inventory)."

Boylan also noted that Kubota was exempt from air permitting "due to low air emissions."

Phil Sutton, Kubota's chief administrative officer, said Kubota made an internal review in July following contact from ProPublica about their report.

Sutton said that review "found that over a period of time that the calculation errors had gone on."

"Over the years this data somehow got improperly reported, and quite honestly, nobody said anything to us, whether it was EPD or EPA, and we didn't notice anything until this thing came up in July," Sutton said.

The source of the error is in the datasheets provided by the steel supplier, with a change happening between 2015 and 2016, Kubota officials said.

"It's clear that we didn't change the steel," Sutton said. "The steel composition has not changed. Nothing has changed except for the information that was showing on those sheets."

Boylan said this overestimation of risk from the Toxic Release Inventory data extends [...]

State to test water for persistent chemicals
Alex Wittwer, Baker City Herald
https://www.bakercityherald.com/state-to-test-water-for-persistent-chemicals/article_87280b86-40ea-11ec-8c3b-b70f2297bad5.html

LA GRANDE — The state of Oregon plans to test 150 drinking water systems across the state for the presence of PFAS, or per- and poly-fluorinated substances.

Of those 150 sites to be tested, 17 reside in Northeast Oregon, including 11 in Umatilla County, and two in Union county. Baker, Grant, Morrow and Wallowa counties each have just one testing site. The locations were chosen due to their proximity to known or suspected PFAS use or contamination sites.

Those testing sites include the cities of Irrigon, Pendleton, Milton-Freewater, Elgin, John Day and Joseph. Other sites include the Ash Grove cement manufacturing site in Baker City, the Amazon data center in Hermiston and the Sacajawea Mobile Home Park in La Grande.

This is not the first time that Oregon has tested its water systems for the presence of the chemicals. Between 2013 and 2015, a study from the OHA tested all major public drinking water systems in Oregon cities with more than 10,000 residents found no detections of PFAS. So far, Oregonians do not seem to be exposed to these chemicals in harmful amounts through their water according to the Oregon Health Authority.

The Oregon Department of Environmental Quality, in partnership with the Oregon Health Authority, will be conducting the testing. The 150 sites that will be tested is up from the 65 tested between 2013 and 2015, and now includes smaller rural communities and cities. The test will now include up to 25 PFAS chemicals, up from the six tested in the 2013-2015 study. The cooperative between the DEQ and OHA seeks to crack down on PFAS contamination that could end up in drinking water, a primary concern to both agencies.

PFAS and a family of chemicals that do not break down in the environment or in human bodies. Those chemicals are linked to cancer, reduced fertility in women and development of infants and children, among other symptoms. The chemicals have been used since the 1940s and are found in thousands of household and commercial items, such as nonstick pots and pans, waterproof clothing and firefighting foam agents.

Some plants, such as grasses, can absorb contamination when they are fertilized with PFAS-containing biosolids from wastewater treatment plants. This has resulted in cows producing contaminated milk in some dairy farms in the U.S. There is also evidence that when surface water is contaminated, certain PFAS compounds can bioaccumulate in fish.

The analysis is being paid for through an EPA grant and will be done at no cost to the water systems of local cities. The DEQ's laboratory will analyze drinking water samples from selected public water systems for 25 PFAS compounds.

While there are no enforceable regulations regarding PFAS usage, the EPA has set a chronic lifetime health advisory for drinking water of 70 parts per trillion. The OHA has developed its own health advisory levels for PFAS in drinking water that are lower than EPA's, with the OHA's advisory set at 30 parts per trillion.

If tested, most people in the U.S. would have PFAS measured in their blood, according to the OHA. However, testing for PFAS exposure is expensive, and not likely to be covered by insurance.

Health risks from long-term exposure to PFAS chemicals can affect growth, learning and behavior of infants and children, reduce a woman's chance of getting pregnant, interfere with the body's hormones, increase cholesterol levels, affect the immune system and increase the risk of cancer.

$10 Billion for PFAS, Other Contaminants in Infrastructure Bill

Pat Rizzuto, Bloomberg Law

https://news.bloomberglaw.com/environment-and-energy/10-billion-for-pfas-other-contaminants-in-infrastructure-bill?context=search&index=28

The $1.2 trillion infrastructure bill awaiting President Joe Biden's signature includes $10 billion to help water utilities address emerging contaminants including "forever chemicals" or per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS).

The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (H.R. 3684), which passed the House Nov. 5. and the Senate in August, allocates that money to states and tribes through three separate grant programs:

$1 billion through the Clean Water State Revolving Fund;
$4 billion through the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund;and
$5 billion through Safe Drinking Water Act grants offered to small and disadvantaged communities, which will not have to match the federal funds.

Solar-Powered Insect Trap: A potential alternative to pesticide

NA, The Daily Star

https://www.thedailystar.net/news/bangladesh/agriculture/news/solar-powered-insect-trap-potential-alternative-pesticide-2225521

Farmers of Patuakhali are getting the opportunity to use the solar-powered insect trap that kills most of the pests that wreak havoc on crops.

A solar-powered insect trap stores power in a battery, with which a bulb glows for four hours from sunset. The harmful insects and flies hovering over the crops in search of food get attracted to the bright light and perish on the toxic water kept in a tub beneath it.

The agricultural officials come to the fields in the morning and observe the dead insects in the water of the tub. They identify the number of beneficial insects and harmful insects among the dead insects. Later, they advise the farmers to use pesticides in the field if the number of harmful insects is high.

Farmers are getting the opportunity to use this environment friendly technology for free and are benefiting from pest management.

However, the farmers and field-level agricultural officials said that the number of traps is lesser than needed. This technology has been proven to be beneficial to the farmers to protect the crop from the attack of harmful insects.

Yunus Hawlader, a farmer of Shiali village under Patuakhali Sadar upazila, has cultivated aman paddy on his two acres of land this year. He used kerosene oil-fueled light traps last year to prevent a pest invasion. But this year, the Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) has set up a solar-powered insect trap on his paddy field.

"I prefer the technology provided by the DAE as it is eco-friendly and cheaper than kerosene-fueled one. As a result, we can use it with ease," he said.

Farmer Abdul Latif, a neighbour of Yunus, has cultivated aman on his three acres of land. A solar-powered insect trap has also been installed beside his paddy field.

The technology is very beneficial and not harmful to the environment, he added.

Abdul Mannan, another farmer in the village, said the number of solar-powered insect traps should be increased so that more farmers can have access to the technology.

Abdul Awal, deputy assistant agriculture officer of Shiali area, said the solar-powered insect trap is very useful for farmers and it can play a crucial role to prevent pest invasion without harming the environment.

As it is cost-effective and environment friendly, farmers are showing interest to use it, he said.

"However, the allocation of the traps is lesser than required. My work area comprises three villages but I have been provided only four such traps. More farmers would have been benefited, if the number of the traps had been increased," he added.

Md Mohiuddin, deputy director of Patuakhali DAE, said that only 180 solar-powered insect traps have been distributed in eight upazilas of Patuakhali. These include 24 traps in Patuakhali Sadar upazila and Kalapara each and 22 traps each in Baufal, Galachipa, Dashmina, Mirzaganj, Dumki and Rangabali upazilas.

EPA Denies TSCA Section 21 Petition Regarding Chemical Mixtures in Cigarettes
Lynn L. Bergeson and Carla N. Hutton, Bergeson & Campbell Blogs
http://www.tscablog.com/entry/epa-denies-tsca-section-21-petition-regarding-chemical-mixtures-in-cigarett

On October 29, 2021, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced its response to a petition submitted under Section 21 of the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA) seeking a rule requiring cigarette manufacturers to eliminate the hazardous chemicals used and to develop new product designs that eliminate or reduce the cigarette butt disposal risks to the environment. 86 Fed. Reg. 59931. EPA states that TSCA Section 6(a) authorizes it to determine if a chemical substance or mixture in manufacturing, processing, distribution in commerce, use, disposal, or any combination of these activities presents an unreasonable risk of injury to health or the environment. If EPA determines that there is unreasonable risk to health or the environment, then EPA must, by rule, issue regulations to the extent necessary so that the chemical substance no longer presents such risk. EPA notes that TSCA Section 3(2)(B), which defines "chemical substance," excludes "tobacco or any tobacco product," however. Under Section 201(rr) of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (FFDCA), "tobacco product" means "any product made or derived from tobacco that is intended for human consumption, including any component, part, or accessory of a tobacco product." EPA states that it finds that the petitioner has not met its burden as defined in TSCA Sections 6(a) and 21(b)(1) "because cigarettes are not a product that can be regulated under TSCA section 6(a)."

Switching to 'Healthier' Mediterranean Diet Increases Pesticide Exposure Three-fold, Unless You Go Organic
NA, Beyond Pesticides
https://beyondpesticides.org/dailynewsblog/2021/11/switching-to-healthier-mediterranean-diet-increases-pesticide-exposure-three-fold-unless-you-go-organic/

(Beyond Pesticides, November 9, 2021) Replacing a modern, 'western' diet of highly processed foods with a Mediterranean diet filled with conventional, chemically-grown fruits and vegetables triples exposure to toxic pesticides, according to research recently published in The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition. However, this disturbing change can be eliminated by eating a Mediterranean diet consisting entirely of organic food, which is not sprayed with synthetic pesticides. The advantages of the Mediterranean diet, often ranked as the 'best diet' and emphasized by medical practitioners for its health benefits, now appear to depend on the production practices involved in the meals an individual eats. "There is growing evidence from observational studies that the health benefits of increasing fruit, vegetables and wholegrain consumption are partially diminished by the higher pesticide exposure associated with these foods," said study coauthor Per Ole Iversen, MD. "Our study demonstrates that consumption of organic foods allows consumers to change to a healthier diet, without an increased intake of pesticides."

Researchers began their investigation by establishing a randomized trial consisting of 27 adults, all of whom were postgraduate student volunteers on a study abroad course in Greece. The experiment lasted a total of five weeks, including a two-week intervention in the middle where the students' 'western' food diet was switched for a defined Mediterranean diet. Before the intervention, students ate their normal 'western' diet, which included all conventional foods. For a typical 'western' diet, think burger and French fries, while researchers served for instance, a Greek salad, sweet and sour chicken and vegetables, and whole grain rice for the Mediterranean diet.

Researchers split the group in two (n=13 and n=14), with half receiving a Mediterranean diet with conventional foods, and the other half receiving organic foods. Participants kept food journals before, during, and after the intervention. Urine samples were taken over a 24h period and analyzed for pesticide residue. Scientists

examined the foods provided to the student participants for 492 different pesticide active ingredients, and used these data to determine which pesticides would be tested in urine. The list includes plant growth regulators, synthetic herbicides like glyphosate, insecticides in the organophosphate, neonicotinoid, and pyrethroid class, and both synthetic and metal-based fungicides.

The study found that switching from a 'western' to a Mediterranean diet increased pesticide levels in urine by three-fold. For organophosphate insecticides in particular, levels increased nearly 4x (from 7 to 25 µg/d). Between the organic and conventional Mediterranean diet, individuals that ate organic had 91% lower pesticide residue than those consuming foods only produced through conventional chemical farming practices. Researchers found that the primary source for pesticide residue came from chemically grown fruit, vegetables, and whole grain cereals. As the study authors note, such major disparities could have significant impacts on health.

"Many of the synthetic pesticides detected in both food and urine samples in this study are confirmed or suspected endocrine disrupting chemicals (EDC)," noted study co-author Carlo Leifert, PhD. "The 10 times higher pesticide exposure from conventional foods may therefore provide a mechanistic explanation for the lower incidence of overweight/obesity, metabolic syndrome and cancer associated with high levels of organic food consumption in epidemiological/cohort studies."

The research is so convincing, it may be possible to base future public health research upon. "One of the difficulties of assessing the public health impacts of dietary exposure to pesticides is that once pesticides are widely used in food production everybody gets exposed," said Leonidas Rempelos, PhD. "This study demonstrated the potential of [...]

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